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A DIALOGUE OR DISCOVRSE

Betweene a

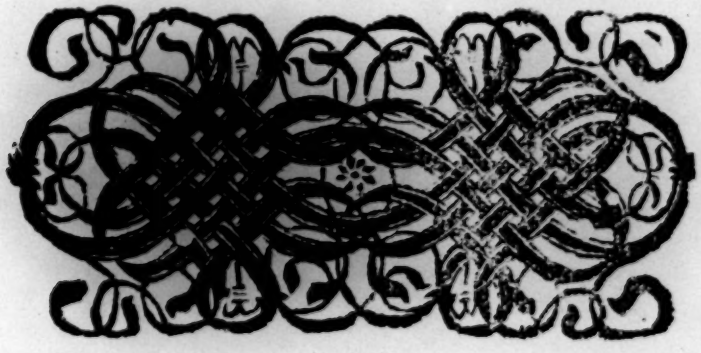
Parliament-man

And a

Roman-Catholick,

Touching

The preſent ſtate of Recuſants in ENGLAND.



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A Diſcourſe or Dialogue betweene a Parliament man and a Roman Catholicke, touching the preſent ſtate of Recuſants in England.

Cath.

Pray tell me, Sir, what are you Noble and worthy Senators reſolved to ruine all Catholicks, root and branch?

Proteſt.

We ſhall, without doubt, proceed againſt you according to the Lawes, for to what end were Statutes enacted, if they be not put in execution?

Cath.

Tis true, Sir, but may not Lawes be convenient and neceſſary for ſome times, and yet prudently ſuſpended at other times? Nay, may they not bee wholly abrogated when the King and Commonwealth thinkes fit? you know that when the cauſe and motive of the Law doth univerſally ceaſe, the Law it ſelfe muſt needs fall and be annulled.

Proteſt.

I know it well, but that is not our caſe; for the motives and reaſons which heretofore obliged our Parliaments to enact our Statutes againſt Recuſants, doe ſtill continue. They are not, I am ſure, univerſally ceaſed, though perhaps they may be in reſpect of ſome particu-

lar Papiſts. And therefore I cannot thinke but the neglect of putting them in execution is both offenſive to God, and dangerous to our State.

Cath.

Sir, you have briefly touched two maine points, whereof either of them would require a more full diſcuſſion, if I were to give you ſatisfaction therein, then the time and place will now permit. Yet in a word, I pray give mee leave to tell you, that I ſee not why the ſuſpenſion of a rigorous hand, and a charitable moderation of your illimited power over a ſmall number of poore Catholicks, whom you may ſqueeze and bruiſe to nothing, how and when you pleaſe, can breed a ſcruple in your conſcience, or be offenſive to Almighty God. For although in your opinion the beleefe and Religion of Catholickes bee falſe, and conſequently that your zeale to the truth (in your conceit) doe urge you to ſuffer no miſcreants amongſt you, yet this zeal being only grounded upon the literall text of the Scripture interpreted by your own diſcourſe, or private ſpirit, how can you thinke that the ſence and explication of this ſacred authority is ſo infalible, or evident, as that he may be juſtly puniſhed who wil not (even againſt his own conſcience never ſo rationally grounded as he thinks) adhere to your conceit and cleave to your opiniõ: were not this both to wrong your neighbour (eſpecially if he be as vertuous as your ſelfe) and to deſtroy the firſt principle wherupon your predeceſſours built their deſertion of the Roman Church? But howſoever, may you not in pure charity (for I ſuppoſe you wiſh our eternall ſalvation) without offence to God (of which point only I now ſpeake) ſuffer us to live amongſt you with intention and deſire to bring us to the knowledge

of

of what you deeme to be truth, and with reaſon and perſwaſion to make us of your religion? This you ſee is the practice of other Nations, both Catholickes and Proteſtants, to admit and tolerate in their Common-wealths (ſo farre as ſtands with the ſecurity of their States) ſuch as profeſſe a different beliefe from theirs. You muſt condemne the greater part of the States and Kingdomes of Europe, if you will blame and diſapprove this Chriſtian indulgence. It is ſo you know in France, Germany, Suevia, Polonia, Muſcovia, &c. And even in the Pope and Spaines dominions, are not the Iewes permitted to live and converſe amongſt Chriſtians, in hope to bring them to acknowledge their Meſſias? The very Turke, Perſian, and other Heathen princes, doe ſuffer Catholickes to enjoy their profeſſion in divers of their territories. Will you only be more ſcrupulous then all the Chriſtians of Europe, and more ſevere to your owne Countreymen (bee it ſpoken without offence) then Turkes and Infidels?

Proteſt.

Ile tell you Sir, could I be perſwaded that ſuch a connivence at Recuſants, were not hurtfull to our preſent government, and that the Roman Catholicks notwithſtanding their profeſſion, could be true and loyall ſubjects to a Proteſtant King or Common-wealth, I would never give my voyce to have them uſed with rigor and ſeverity, much leſſe with cruelty and bloudſhed. But I muſt tell you, Sir, that you papiſts doe much wrong us, in blazing abroad, that wee perſecute and puniſh you for religion. It was never ſo. Queene *Elizabeth* and King *Iames*, both of happy memory,

have ſtill made publicke profeſſion to the contrary: her Majeſties proclamations in the yeare 1591. teſtifie ſufficiently, that ſhe never puniſhed any for religion. The prologues of our ſtatutes beare witneſſe of their motives. Our publicke printed bookes, namely, *The execution of Iuſtice in England*, demonſtrates the ſame. And therefore it is not your religion, but your treaſons we puniſh. No, no, Sir, could we bee ſecured of your loyalty and obedience to our King and Country, being as we now are, Proteſtants, you might perhaps be ſuffered to live and converſe among us with all convenient freedome; but I would gladly ſee the man would dare to anſwer to what I can object in this kind.

Cath.

Sir, you know the motives which in *Henry* 8. time began the change of religion, upon what grounds continued in *Edward* 6. how Q. *Mary* with more zeal then mercie, ſought to replant what her father and brother had almoſt ſupplanted (where, I pray, let mee tell you by the way, that of what religion ſoever you bee, you ſhall ſeldome find that a misbeleevers bloud is a fit liquor to water the rolles of Faith.) You know how doubtfull it was for 2 or 3 of the firſt years of Q. *Elizabeths* reigne what religion ſhould bee ſetled; and what moved your Stateſmen in thoſe dayes, to incline rather to eſtabliſh Proteſtancie? How promiſcuouſly then for 8 or 9 years both Maſſe and Service, Catholicks and Proteſtants were in ſome ſort tolerated? But how afterward your jealouſies of a Catholicke Queen Competitrix to the Crowne, moved your politicians to uſe ſeverity; inſomuch that both in Q. *Elizabeths* and K. *Iames* his reigne, ſuch rigorous and bitter lawes

have

have been made for the ſuppreſſing of all Roman Catholicks within this Kingdome, that even the profeſſion of our faith is now a crime. And no Roman Catholick, how innocent ſoever, but is puniſhable by your lawes preciſely in that he is a Roman Catholick. I confeſſe this ſeverity ſprung not only from the motives of State and policie, current in thoſe times, but was much exaſperated by the rigorous proceedings of the Court of Rome, and by the factious combinations & ſeditious plots of ſome few buſie boutfeux of the Roman faith: yet I am ſo confident that our religion doth not teach us any thing contrary to the fidelity we owe to our King and Countrey, though Proteſtants; yea, even though they proſecute us, that I dare anſwer to whatſoever you can object againſt us.

Proteſt.

Let us ſee Sir, I could firſt tell you, that the vaſt ambition of the Court of Rome, their continuall practices and endevours to conſerve and augment their greatneſſe, and the Popes pretended authority to create and depoſe Kings and Emperours, (which you know he daily aſſumes unto himſelfe as a prerogative of his primacie) were able to make us jealous of you; but I will onely ſpeake of the ſpeciall power which you generally give him over Heretical and Schiſmatical States and Princes, as our State and King is in your opinion.

Cath.

Without interrupting you Sir, I can aſſure you, that moſt wiſe and experienced Catholicks do not little blame the ambition of the Court of Rome, as well as you. And as for the Popes power of creating Kings,

there

there is now no Prince will either expect or desire creation from him, further then by reason of State it may seeme requisite. That practice began when both Popes and Princes were Saints: the institution of his primacie includes no such authority.

Protest.

How soever, you see that our case is different from the case of Catholicke Princes: for you say, that the Pope can depose Kings for heresie or schisme; and this is a generall tenent amongst you: or for joyning in league and alliance with Protestant States; nay, even for notorious vices. And some of you adde, even for insufficiencie; and in all these cases the Pope himselfe must bee Iudge. I pray you what Protestant Prince can be secure, supposing this doctrine be true, and that the Popes party, either forraigne or domesticall, bee stronger then such a Princes? Doe you not hold that the Pope can absolve the subjects of such a King from their allegeance? and hath he not done it here in England? Did not his Nuncio in Spain solicite for may yeares together, to have an Armado sent against this Kingdome? And was not this effected at the instance and pursuit of your English Iesuites? Did not your Cardinall *Allen* write and print a seditious letter by the Popes command, to stirre up the Papists of England to rebellion? Was he not made Cardinall to authorize this fact? Was not Queene *Elizabeth* excommunicated and deposed by the Pope? And did not the Pope by his Bulls, give and bestow the Kingdome of England upon the King of Spaine? Did not *Dolman* write a booke by the Popes order, to disprove Queene *Elizabeths* title to the Crowne, and

to

to transferre it upon Portugall? Are not theſe your tenents? Are not theſe your practiſes? And if theſe tenents ſubſiſt, your practices muſt needs follow upon all occaſions; which if ſometimes they doe not, it is not for want of principles to make them good in your conceit, but for want of power to put them in execution: and therefore wee conclude, that both the Pope and you doe but expect a fit opportunity to blow up both our King and Parliament, and ſet up your Religion.

Cath.

I confeſſe, Sir, your allegations are true: but the doctrine you mention is not ſo univerſall as you imagine. Thoſe Authors which you ſeeme moſt to point at, too too much favouring the Popes authority in temporall affaires, (wherein they are ſuſpected to bee partiall by reaſon of their dependance in that Court) have been deſervedly condemned by our Catholicke Vniverſities, and their bookes publickly burned by the order of Catholicke Magiſtrates. And for my part, I think that all the Catholickes of England both ought and will give you full ſatisfaction in theſe your demands; nor ſhall I thinke him innocent, or a worthy member of this Common-wealth, that will not acknowledge his faithfull loyalty and conſtant allegeance to our King and Countrey, though Proteſtants, independant of all forraigne or Papall authority, which wee really performe, let Schoolmen in their ſpeculations diſpute what they pleaſe, 'tis all I ſuppoſe you deſire at our hands.

Proteſt.

Why doe you not then at the leaſt take the oath of

Allegeance? though perhaps for the oath of Supremacie there may bee ſome more difficulty in it, according to the grounds of your religion.

Cath.

Sir, if you onely intend to bee ſecured of our allegeance, we ſhall eaſily agree; but to make us decide a queſtion diſputable in Schooles by ſwearing an univerſall negative, to what effect I pray? For although in mine opinion the pope cannot depoſe any abſolute prince, though an hereticke, no not in any caſe, of his owne power, or by any authority inherent in his perſon or dignity: nor doe I thinke that any indifferent man will ſay, that the pope can depoſe King *Charles* now reigning over his ſubjects, ſetled, after two or three generations, in a different beliefe from the Church of Rome; much leſſe that he can abſolve his Catholicke ſubjects from their allegeance due unto him. Nevertheleſſe, it may be, at leaſt divers, both Catholicke and Proteſtant Divines, are of opinion, that ſome hereticall princes may in ſome caſes bee depoſed by their ſubjects. And certes you cannot think to prevent the dangers which ſeeme to follow out of this tenent, by forcing men to ſweare againſt their conſcience: nor to eſtabliſh an univerſall negative in a diſputable point by violented oathes. Who can abjure as impious and hereticall, this tenent and poſition (held and maintained by ſo many both Catholickes and Proteſtants) that ſome excommunicated princes may in ſome caſes be depoſed by their ſubjects? What Engliſhman knowes the power which ſome Common wealths pretend to have over their princes lawfully excommunicated; eſpecially where the prince

is elective? At leaſt what is this ſpeculative queſtion in generall to our allegeance in particular? Or what ſecurity can you imagine will ariſe to our King or Countrey, though Catholickes, conſtrained and terrified, ſhould take ſuch a doubtfull oath? Doe but ſuppoſe that wee had at this preſent a King (which thankes be to God is farre from his Majeſties diſpoſition) whoſe manifeſt endeavours were not onely to tyrannize over us, to oppreſſe our liberties, ſubvert our fundamentall Lawes, and introduce an Arbitrary government, but even to deſtroy and change the Religion now ſetled in the Commonwealth, and which it conceives to be the true and onely way to ſalvation. And ſhall I ſweare that it were hereticall and damnable to ſay, that the Parliament, repreſenting the body of the whole Common-wealth, could in this caſe depoſe ſuch a King? As for the Pope, I tell you gain, I do not conceive that any ſupreme power of depoſing Kings can reſide in his perſon by divine right, nor that he can of himſelfe puniſh any ſoveraigne Prince otherwiſe then by cenſures purely Eccleſiaſticall, which cannot deprive any man of his temporall eſtate and goods, at leaſt in Countries where Proteſtants either are the greater part or permitted in great numbers. But if wee ſuppoſe the religion of any Chriſtian Kingdome or Common-wealth, which you pleaſe, to be the only true way to ſalvation; and that all civill government ought to be chiefly for the good of mens ſoules (though its more immediate end be the proſperity of their lives and fortunes) and conſequently that the king or ſupreme head of every Commonwealth ought to be a father to his people, and diſ-

poſe his government to their good : If then contrariwile this King or ſupreme head ſhould manifeſtly endeavor to deſtroy and aboliſh this ſuppoſed true faith and religion univerſally ſetled in his Kingdome, and goe about to introduce with violence a falſe and Idolatrous profeſſion leading to eternall perdition, what, I ſay, in this caſe ſuch a Kings ſubjects aſſembled in Parliament may, or may not doe I dare not ſweare : Wherfore I conclude, that as wiſe States-men, you ought not to make us ſweare to this or that univerſall tenent in points problematically diſputed by Divines, but to ſecure your ſelves of our particular allegeance & fidelity to our King and country, which you may juſtly exact of us, and we as juſtly performe. And for the Oath of ſupremacie tis a meere folly to imagine that any ſecular or lay man can be ſupreme head of the church, none of your ſelves beleeve it, nor any Chriſtian religion or ſect did ever before *Henry* 8. profeſſe ſuch a tenent ; and Mr. *Calvin* in his relation *de Valentiniano, Theodoſio & S. Ambroſio* ſtrongly oppoſing this fond aſſertion, calls them who firſt gave this title to *Henry* 8 *Homines inconſiderati*, and concludes, *erunt enim blaſphemi cum vocarent ipſum ſummum Eccleſiæ caput ſub Chriſto.*

Prot. You ſay well and I could wiſh all the Papiſts of England were of your opinion in the point of depoſition, it would perhaps bee better for them; but the contrary doctrine is more generall amongſt you, & thence do follow moſt dangerous ſequels. & ſometimes moſt enormous effects: your Divines tell you that tis lawfull for any Catholicke ſubject to take armes againſt his Prince, if he be either an hereticke, or an open perſe-

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cutor of the Roman Church; nay, that it is no ſinne to kill him, either by private treachery, or publicke aſſault: and of this wee have ſeen in our age, divers lamentable examples practiſed abroad, and ſome moſt execrable attempts here at home.

Cath.

Truly, Sir, your Divines, as *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others, are more free and forward in this point then any Catholick I know, and their practcies have farre exceeded ours; except perhaps the powder treaſon: for that was Diabolicall beyond measure. But I muſt tell you, as before, that the authors you point at, have been condemned and burned for theſe tenents by Catholicke Divines and Magiſtrates; and therefore any Catholick may and ought indeed diſclaime them, as no doctrine of our faith or religion.

Proteſt.

Well, well, Sir, you will never waſh off the infamy of that powder-plot; you know what prooſes were brought in againſt your Ieſuites before the Lords Commiſſioners here at home, and their buſie endeavours at the ſame time both in Courts and Colledges beyond the ſeas: I could tell you the particulars, but that I ſuppoſe you know them at leaſt as well as I.

Cath.

Sir, you know I am neither Prieſt nor Ieſuite, nor will I Apologize for any man whom I conceive to bee faulty in ſo high a degree. But I verily thinke there is never a Catholicke Gentleman in England but doth abhorre and deteſt that wicked conſpiracie as much as any Proteſtant of you all. And ſure King *James* knew well that this monſter was hatched in the breaſt of

ſome few particular and ever to be hated Catholicks, but was farre from the conſent or thought of all the reſt. See his Proclamation November 7. his words are theſe: *We are by good experience ſo well perſwaded of the loyalty of divers of our ſubjects of the Roman Religion, that they doe as much abhorre this deteſtable conſpiracie, as we our ſelves.*

Proteſt.

I confeſſe, Sir, you ſeeme to give me ſome ſatisfaction; and me thinkes I ſee that a Papiſt may bee a good ſubject. But I could yet object more difficulties, if the time would permit, and which indeed are the root of all your diſloyalties. And it is the education and diſpoſition of your Seminary Prieſts, who by their power and authority have a maine ſway over your conſciences, and under pretence of religion (the ſtrongeſt motive in nature to lead the vulgar to any either good or bad effect) can bend and carry your paſſions to their owne ends and deſignes. And if I had time to tell you in what manner and maxime they are brought up and ſent hither, I could let you ſee that wee have little reaſon to bee confident of their fidelitie.

Cath.

Sir, I know what you ayme at, and I confeſſe ſome things may be objected in that kinde worthy the reflection of a good Commonwealths man, but I could eaſily ſatisfie you, If we had time for it, and if your ſelfe were in place (as truly your parts deſerve, and I deſire) to put in execution ſuch remedies as I can clearly ſhew may well ſtand with the conveniencie of your preſent government, I feare not but I could quickly baniſh all your

your jealouſies. No, no, Sir, let but your poore Catholicke ſubjects live quietly amongſt you, ſeeke not the totall ruine of their families, ſpill not the blood of your Chriſtian brethren, be but pleaſed to uſe your clemency, and graciouſly connive at their ſubſiſtence, and you ſhall finde them ready to conſpire with none but you, nor ayme at their owne temporall good, but by the advancement of your Commonwealth, whereof if once you vouchſafe to admit them as worthy members, the Popes power ſhall no way hinder their obedience to his Majeſtie and you. For although the Court of Rome hath ſometimes too freely uſed both Saint *Peters* keyes and Saint *Pauls* ſword, yet doe we finde that the Catholicke Clergie in ſuch occurrences both in England, France, and other Nations, have protected their Princes, and profeſſed and taught their allegeance, notwithſtanding the Popes cenſures.

Proteſt.

I could wiſh your Prieſts would doe ſo too, but I ſee not how we can expect ſuch loyaltie at their hands, and therefore you ſee his Majeſtie hath proclaimed their baniſhment. And ſurely if wee had ſuffered the Popes Agent to continue here, he would have had a care of his Maſters intereſts.

Cath.

Sir, how fit it may bee to ſuffer an Agent from the Pope in a State generally Proteſtant, intermixed with ſome Catholickes, I will not diſpute: but for the baniſhing of our Prieſts meerly for exerciſing their function, tis in vaine; you may hang them at your pleaſure, but as long as there remaines a Catholicke in England, there will ſtill be Prieſts, becauſe wee beleeve that we have an eſſentiall dependance and neceſ-

ſitie

ſity of Prieſts. And therefore Prieſts will venture their lives for the ſalvation of our ſoules: Tis, and ever hath beene the ſpirit of our Church and Religion: when all comes to all, you will finde that a moderate hand over us is more Chriſtian, more humane, and more politick.

Proteſt.

Faith, Sir, if you could finde a way how we might be ſecured of the fidelity of your Prieſts, and that their dependance of Rome, and affection to forraigne States (for which you know your Jeſuites have beene baniſhed even out of ſome Catholick Countries,) were not obnoxious and lyable to our juſt ſuſpitions, I could, mee thinkes, be content Recuſants lived amongſt us in a civill intelligence and ordinary friendſhip. But you ſee wee are ſo jealous of them, that wee have rather permitted ſtrangers and forraigne Prieſts to reſide in her Majeſties Chappell, though with no little danger: For tis a wonder that the more zealous ſort of our people have not made ſome tumults and uprores, ſeeing the Chappell ſo frequented as it was. And you know wee cannot be ſecured of any ſtrangers fidelity to our Countrey, eſpecially if they be Prieſts or of a different Religion, and daily frequent both Court and Towne, being imboldned in that they are not lyable to our Lawes: for beſides their zeale to Religion, they are naturally inclined to give notice of what they heare, and favour in what they can their owne Countreyes intereſts, and therefore you ſee the like is not ſuffered in other Countreyes.

Cath.

Truly, Sir, I doubt not but I can clearly ſhew you how you may be ſecured of the loyalty of ſome of our Engliſh Prieſts, and how their dependance of Rome may be

be of that nature as ſhall give you no juſt occaſion of ſuſpition, and there ore ~~muſt~~ bee admitted upon thoſe termes and conditions as would baniſh all ſuſpition, and prevent all dangers. As for her Majeſties Chappell, tis in the Articles of her mariage, agreed upon betwixt the two States, ratified under the broad Seale of each Kingdome, and it would be againſt the law of Nations, and unworthie the fidelity of a Chriſtian Prince, to infringe and violate ſuch a publicke contract. If there were a law that no treatie of forraigne Princes with the ſtate of England ſhall be valide untill it be confirmed by act of Parliament, then you might ſay, why did not they looke to it? But till ſuch a Statute be enacted, me thinks you ſhould bee more ſenſible of the King and Kingdomes honour. Alas, Sir, conſider that now whileſt you happily are ſitting at the ſterne of this Commonwealth, and piouſly endeavouring to reforme the corruptions and abuſes of our Courts, and government, as alſo reſpectfully ſeeking to vindicate the ancient liberty of our countrey, ſhall we onely your poore Catholicke ſubjects be excluded from this generall Jubilee? Reflect, I pray, what will be the effect of your rigour towards us; the meaner ſort will fill your priſons, others will find means to make away their eſtates, ſome will baniſh themſelves to enjoy their conſcience, others will bee protected by friendſhip: and I feare a great part through frailty will conforme. And in this violent ſtate ſhall you be more ſecure of our fidelity? or doe you thinke by this meanes to raiſe greater ſummes out of our eſtates then by a moderate compoſition? Beſides, wee are Chriſtians, and will not our cries aſcend to heaven? Nay, if you profeſſe to make your leagues with forraigne States, and might

your warres with Catholicke Princes onely for the advancement of your Religion, and not as Commonwealths-men for your temporall intereſts, confirming your intentions by oppreſſing us here at home, will not this ſlacken the ayding hands of ſome of your confederates? will France, Portugall, Venice, and other Catholicke States goe along with you to the deſtruction of their owne Religion? Will the Lutherans of Germany, or the Arminians of Holland (wholly different from you in beleefe) tye their deſignes to your zeale? Will not Catholick Princes, both your enemies and allyes, be glad of this pretext when they ſhall finde occaſion to worke you miſchiefe, and covered with the ſpecious veyle of Religion double their endeavours to ſatisfie their reſtleſſe ambition by your diſadvantage? you are now Stateſmen, and muſt open and enlarge your ſoules to contemplate univerſalls, all petty and particular objects are to be conſidered, not in themſelves, but in the whole; tis now the maſſe of government you are to manage: take then ſome moderate courſe (then which nothing more eaſie) to ſecure your ſelves of our allegeance, and let us all conſpire to make one Civill Body, that joyned and united both in your domeſtick intereſts, and in your forraigne leagues and warres, (their motives not being your Religion) we may, as your Catholick Allies doe, engage our ſelves as willingly, and as farre as you. Did not King *Iames* ſay well, A too ſevere perſecution makes men deſperate? *Non coercet ſed provocat violentia.* Clemency begets love, love breeds loyalty.

Proteſt.

Proteſt.

I doubt not, Sir, but wee ſhall conſider the reaſons you produce, and truely if I can doe you any ſervice I will; and if theſe your tenents were common to all Papiſts I conceive you would finde us more indulgent, eſpecially if you could give full ſatisfaction in the pointes I mentioned; but we ſhall not eaſily permit you to ſell your eſtates and tranſport your monies; for that would both impoveriſh our Kingdome, and give you occaſion to provoke ſome forraign States againſt us, with your clamors. And therfore methinks it were worthy your labour to drawe ſuch a proteſtation of your fidelity as you think Papiſts might lawfully take, and as would perhaps content our Parliament.

Cath.

As for the tranſport of our monies, it ſeemes you are no Marchant, a little bill of exchange (which no way hurtes your Common-wealth) is of more profit then the tranſport of any monies you have in *ſpecie*. And for our complaints abroad, tis true, nature will grone (do what we can) when ſhe is violently oppreſſed, and ſome perhaps wilbe too buſie; but let your mercy ſhine upon the innocent and you are freed from all danger before God and man. Ile tell you, Sir, I framed, the laſt winter privatly to my ſelfe a ſhort petition in the behalfe of Catholickes, and have ſince added thereunto ſuch a proteſtation as you ſpeake of, here they are, peruſe them I pray, and if you thinke fit make your moderate friends partakers of them, whom if they ſatisfie I ſhall be hartily glad; if nothing will ſerve but our totall ruine, Gods will be done, at leaſt it will be a

comfort to have given this teſtimony of our allegeance and fidelity, ſo that if we periſh, it muſt needs be for our religion, ſince the paſt crimes of ſome few, and the diſputable opinions of others, can never be a legall warrant to condemne the innocent, the next time we meete you will tell me more, in the interim God be with you.

To

To the high and honourable Court of Parliament, The humble Petition of the Catholickes of England.

Shewing,

THat whereas divers politicall reaſons, and now dead motives of State, not unknowne to your Wiſedomes; as alſo ſome rigorous proceedings of the Court of Rome, and ſeverall ſeditious combinations (being ſpoken to the griefe of your Petitioners) which heretofore ſome few unworthy Catholickes have practiſed both at home and abroad, againſt their late Soveraigne and this Realme, have been the occaſion of many ſevere Lawes and too too penall Statutes againſt all profeſſors of the Catholick Faith and Religion in this Kingdome; inſomuch that your Wiſedomes know your Petitioners cannot expect to live and ſubſiſt amongſt you, but by the favour of your indulgent connivance, and by the charitable moderation of your illimited power.

May it therefore pleaſe you (moſt noble and worthy Senators) to caſt your eyes of mercie and compaſſion upon your humble Petitioners, appealing to your grace and favour; not for any thing wherein they ſhall be found delinquent againſt their King or Countrey, but for the profeſſion of that faith which their conſcience tells them they neither can nor muſt deny before men, unleſſe they will have Chriſt Ieſus to deny them before his eternall Father.

Wherefore your Petitioners moſt humbly begge upon their knees, that your eſpeciall prudence and clemencie will vouchſafe to diſcerne that ſuch lawes as were for the Legiſlators intentions fitly ordained in one ſeaſon, may be unfitly execu-

ted in another; and that your Statutes enacted in former times against Recuſants, may bee now diſcreetly and mercifully ſuſpended, yea wholly abrogated, the motives thereof being univerſally ceaſed and extinguiſhed. If you thinke there reſt, & that you find amongſt your Petitioners any dreggs of thoſe pragmatick plotters which heretofore have given ſome juſt occaſions of your ſeverity (which God forbid) your Wiſedom know how to uſe the rod of juſtice, but doe not ſynonymize a Profeſſor of the Roman faith *&* perfidious traitor, *make not* Catholick *and* Criminall *to be convertible. Look upon the milde example & practice of the moſt part of the Chriſtian nations of Europe, both Catholicks and Proteſtants which admit and tolerate in their Common-wealths (ſo far as ſtands with the ſecurity of their ſtates) ſuch as profeſſe a different belief from theirs. Let not only your Petitioners amongſt the variety of ſo many ſeverall profeſſions of Chriſtianity as live unpuniſhed here in England, be the ſole object of your wrath & indignation; tye rather your Petitioners unto you with the divine chain of Chriſtian clemencie, that their ſweet yoke and dependance on you, may beget a perfect union in all civill and temporall affairs; force not your loving brethren, friends, coſens, allies, either to leave their native countrey, or yeeld to humane infirmity againſt their own conſcience, of whom you ſhall then bee leſſe ſecure, and miſſe of what you doe or may intend; oppreſſe not with violence the profeſſors of that faith which your fore-fathers lived and died in ſo many hundred yeares together. If ought elſe can be alledged againſt any of them all ſpare them not, only in this (being they are reſolved to ſeeke no earthly redreſſe of what afflictions ſoever you ſhall impoſe upon them, but from your ſelves, and caſting their lives and fortunes wholly into your hands) give them leave here to live and die with you in peace and quietneſſe, in hope to live together without dying in the world to come.*

And

And to wipe away that odious ſuſpition and unworthy aſperſion of diſloyalty, which the factious practices of ſome few particular and ungodly Catholickes hath drawn upon all your Petitioners heads in generall (eſpecially amongſt the vulgar) and which ſome think muſt needs follow from their tenents and dependance of the Popes authority, give them leave here proſtrate at your feet, to offer unto you with all humility this publick and ſolemne proteſtation of their true & faithfull allegeance to their King and Countrey, as a ſacred teſtimony of their conſcience, which I doubt not but they are ready to ſigne with their hands and hearts, and ſeale with their blouds.

The Catholickes of England doe acknowledge & profeſſe King Charles *now reigning, to bee their true and lawfull King, ſupreame Lord, and rightfull Soveraigne of this Realme, and of all other his Majeſties dominions. And therefore they acknowledge themſelves to bee obliged under paine of ſin, to obey his Majeſty in all civill and temporall affairs, as much as any other of his Majeſties ſubjects, and as the lawes and rules of government in this Kingdome doth require at their hands. And that notwithſtanding any power or pretention of the Pope, or See of Rome, or any ſentence or declaration of what kinde or quality ſoever, given or to bee given by the Pope, his predeceſſors or ſucceſſors, or by any authority ſpirituall or temporall proceeding or derived from him or his See, againſt their ſaid King or Countrey, they will ſtill acknowledge and performe to the utmoſt of their abilities, their faithfull loyalty and true allegeance to their ſaid King and Countrey. And they doe openly diſclaime and renounce all forraigne power, bee it either Papall or Princely, ſpirituall or temporall, in as much as it may ſeeme able, or ſhall pretend to free diſcharge or abſolve them from this obligation: or ſhall any way give them leave or licence to raiſe tumults,*

tumults, beare armes, or offer any violence to his Majesties royall person, to the high Court of Parliament, to the State or government. Being all of them ready not only to discover & make knowne to his Majesty, and to the high Court of Parliament, all the treasons and conspiracies made against him or it, which shall come to their hearing; but also to lose their lives in the defence of their King and Countrey, and to resist with their best indeavours, all conspiracies and attempts made against their said King or Countrey, bee they framed or sent under what pretence, or patronized by what forraigne authority soever. And further they professe, that all absolute Princes and supreame Governours of what religion soever they bee, are Gods Lieutenants upon earth, and that obedience is due unto them according to the Lawes of each Commonwealth respectively, in all civill and temporall affaires: and therefore they doe here protest against all doctrine and authority to the contrary. And they doe hold it impious and against the word of God, to maintaine that any private subject may kill & murther the anointed of God his Prince, though of a different beliefe and religion from his. And they abhorre and detest the practice thereof, as damnable and wicked. And lastly, they offer themselves most willingly to accept & embrace the late Protestation of union made by the high Court of Parliament, excepting onely the clause of Religion. Professing that they cannot without sin infringe or violate any contract, or breake their words and promises made or given to any man, though of a different faith and beliefe from the Church of Rome. All which they doe freely and sincerely acknowledge and protest, as in the presence of God, without any equivocation or mentall reservation whatsoever.

FINIS.

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